C L A I M S

1.   A computerized method for improved handling of messages
directed to an user of an electronic messaging system

said method comprising a first step of determining user
characteristics capable of identifying said user as addressee of
a message; and

said method comprising a second step of analyzing a certain
message and determining its message characteristics from one or
a multitude of message fields; and

said method comprising a third step of applying at least one
deduction rule of a potential set of deduction rules to said
certain message, which assigns based on said user
characteristics and said message characteristics a role of said
user to said certain message said role revealing said user's
relationship to said certain message.

2.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages
according to claim 1,

wherein said user characteristics at least comprise one of the
following elements:

        said user's userid in said messaging system;
        said user's name;
        said user's nickname; and

wherein said message characteristics at least comprise one of
the following elements:

the contents of a TO: field;

the contents of a CC: field, identifying addressees receiving a complimentary copy;

the contents of a BCC: field, identifying addressees receiving a blind carbon copy;

the contents of the body of said message; and

wherein said set of deduction rules comprises at least one of the following deduction rules:

a 1. deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-ADDRESSEE, if said user is the only addressee in said TO: field;

a 2. deduction rule, which assigns a role of MULTIPLE-ADDRESSEES, if said user is one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field;

a 3. deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-CC-ADDRESSEE, if said user is the only addressee in said CC: field;

a 4. deduction rule, which assigns a role of MULTIPLE-CC-ADDRESSEES, if said user is one of a multitude of addressees in said CC: field;

a 5. deduction rule, which assigns a role of BCC-ADDRESSEE, if said user is an addressee in said BCC: field;

a 6. deduction rule, which assigns a role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is a member of a distribution list in said TO: field.

3.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 2,

wherein said set of deduction rules further comprise:

a 7. deduction rule, which assigns a role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is the only or one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field but said message does not contain a salutation with said user's name or nickname;

a 8. deduction rule, which assigns a role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is the only or one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field and if said message comprises a footer and said footer does not comprise information referring to a person or entity said user has an established relationship with;

a 9. deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-ADDRESSEE or a role of MULTIPLE-ADDRESSEES respectively, if said user is the only one or one of a multitude of addressees respectively in said CC: field but said message comprises a salutation with said user's name or nickname.

4.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of the proceeding claims,

wherein in a message list comprising said message and other messages directed to said user said role assigned to said message is indicated visually.

5.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 4,

wherein said indication is anyone or combination of the following:

an icon uniquely indicating said role;
a textual indication of said role.

6.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 4,

wherein said message list is organized in groups of messages to which a same role has been assigned.

7.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 6,

wherein within each of said groups messages are organized according to any prioritization technology.

8.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of claims 1 to 3,

wherein, if said message is opened, said message characteristics contributing to said assigned role are visually emphasized.

9.   The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of the preceding claims,

wherein, said third step is performed

for each new arriving message; or

when a message is opened; or

at repeating time intervals for messages for which no role has been assigned yet.

10. The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of the preceding claims,

wherein, said user characteristics and/or message characteristics are determined by application of data/text mining technology.

11. The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of the preceding claims,

wherein, if multiple of said deduction rules are applicable, a predefined precedence scheme defines which of said applicable deduction rules finally succeeds.

12. The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to anyone of the preceding claims,

wherein said messaging system is an e-mail system and said messages are e-mails.

13. A computer system comprising means adapted for carrying out the steps of the method according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 12.

14. A data processing program for execution in a data processing system comprising software code portions for performing a method according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 12 when said program is run on said data processing system.

15. A computer program product stored on a computer usable medium, comprising computer readable program means for causing a

computer to perform a method according to anyone of the
preceding claims 1 to 12 when said program is run on said
computer.